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Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

Addendum

2. Second periodic reports

1. For the consideration of second periodic reports, the Committee followed the procedure it had initiated at its ninth session, i.e., that a pre-session working group would prepare lists of questions relating to the second periodic reports that would be considered at the session. Accordingly, the pre-session working group for the eleventh session of the Committee prepared such lists for six countries: China, Czechoslovakia, El Salvador, Spain, Sri Lanka and Venezuela (CEDAW/C/1992/CRP.2). They were transmitted in writing to the government representatives to invite them to prepare their replies before the meetings. The lists reflect the ideas and views of the members of the pre-session working group as well as those of various members of the Committee, who had submitted contributions to the group. The Committee agreed at its 196th meeting, on 23 January 1992, that the questions prepared by the working group would be included in the report of the Committee.

China

2. The Committee considered the second periodic report of China (CEDAW/C/13/Add.26) at its 196th meeting, on 23 January 1992. The list relating to this report contains the following questions:

"1. Questions of a general nature

"The structural reform of the Chinese economy has generated a spectacular increase in national productivity, enabling GNP to attain an average annual growth rate of 11 per cent. This economic development

will engender a considerable social development. The Human Development Report 1991, issued by UNDP, emphasizes the reconsideration of priorities and maintains that funds allocated to key sectors, such as basic education, primary health care, supply of potable water to rural areas, family planning, food subsidies and social security, genuinely promote sustained and equitable human development.

"What percentage of its GNP has China allocated to social development and human resources?

"2. Progress achieved

"Adoption of laws and regulations intended to strengthen democracy, improve the existing legal system by promoting greater equity and establish new relationships between members of the family based on equality, the sharing of responsibilites and human dignity, especially that of women.

"Accordingly, the laws on succession and marriage confer the same rights and duties on men and women, without discrimination. However, for a woman to be able to conduct her family life in a responsible way and in an equal partnership, she must first have been entitled to education, which is a prerequisite for all equality and all development, and to work that will reflect its specificity.

"The Chinese Government has provided the regions with laws to reform the educational system. Education is now compulsory and free of charge for all children. Laws also guarantee women employment.

"Despite the efforts and positive measures to promote equality, some difficulties subsist; these are due primarily to the cultural bias still shown by Chinese society towards women.

"To what extent are women informed about new provisions and to what extent do they have access to courts or to other remedies to enforce them?

"3. Analysis of the situation article by article

"Article 2

"1. The Act concerning public enterprises, 1988, states that male workers (it does not refer to female workers) have the right to participate in the democratic management of their enterprise. Do women workers participate to the same extent as men?

"2. Paragraph 11 of the same Act states that enterprises must fully exploit the potential of young male and female workers. What is meant here by the word 'exploit'? Does it perhaps mean 'use'?

"3. As regards local laws and regulations, give some specific information about equality of women in promotion, remuneration, the allocation and construction of housing in rural areas.

"4. What measures are taken to protect widows and to ensure their economic independence?

"5. What is the composition of the special group established to study and elaborate laws protecting the rights and interests of women? How are its members elected? Of the 13 members, only 2 are women selected from the All China Women's Federation (ACWF). Why?

"Article 5

"Are there education and media programmes to project the positive images of women rather than to reinforce stereotypes?

"Violence (articles 2, 5, 11, 12 and 16)

"1. What information is there about the level of violence against women in China?

"2. What measures have been introduced to protect women from violence, abuse and exploitation?

"Article 6

"Prostitution exists, even though it is prohibited. Are women who prostitute themselves punished? What are the radical measures which the report refers to as designed to terminate prostitution?

"Article 7

"1. The Chinese National People's Assembly is the body with supreme State authority. Women's share of representation in Parliament at 15 per cent is higher than average. Are women parliamentarians able to act effectively with respect to parliamentary bills; can they modify them? Do they form a group in Parliament? Have they already proposed a parliamentary bill concerning women? If so, which one?

"2. How many women have seats in the people's assemblies (percentage)? Are some regions more willing than others to vote for women, now that the number of candidates exceeds the number of seats at the time of the elections?

"3. How many women members are there in the Communist Party Central Committee, in the Central Advisory Commission and in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress?

"4. What steps have been taken to ensure equal representation?

"5. Key economic legal and political posts are still filled by men; only three such posts, or 1.4 per cent, are filled by women. Obviously, women can only influence and change matters if they reach the decision-making level; what is ACWF doing about this? Is ACWF consulted about women's appointments or promotions to important posts? Does ACWF play a role in the deliberations and decisions concerning problems which affect the future of the country in economic, political, cultural and social matters? To what extent are other groups or individuals consulted on these matters?

"6. How does one become a member of ACWF?

"Article 8

"What is the percentage of women in the diplomatic corps?

"Article 10

"The illiteracy rate for women is still high (70 per cent) despite the efforts of the Chinese Government. What efforts are being made to lower this rate and to stop girls from dropping out of education? Statistics from the Human Development Report: Female enrolment when compared with male enrolment reveals the inequalities. For the year 1987/88 the figures are as follows: primary - 97 per cent; secondary - 74 per cent; higher - 55 per cent; since the total enrolment in higher education is 1.7 per cent, the rate is still very low.

"1. Are measures such as reprimanding or fining parents who do not comply with the law on compulsory education effective to ensure that girls complete their education?

"2. Are there differing entrance requirements for women into tertiary institutions?

"3. Do girls and women have equal access to sport and physical education in both urban and rural schools?

"4. Has the educational reform affected school textbooks? Has women's image been enhanced?

"Article 11

"1. Is the principle of equal pay for work of equal value applied in all areas of economic activity? Have you encountered any difficulties in applying it?

"2. Employment of women rose from 67 per cent in 1970 to 70 per cent in 1990, while during the same period employment of men fell from 90 per cent to 87 per cent. The 3 percentage points lost by men were gained by women. What is the reason for this?

"3. Do self-employed female workers have difficulty in becoming integrated into the system, and what is ACWF doing to help them?

"4. Women head enterprises in the rural areas. More than one third of the specialized enterprises are headed by women. In which segment of economic production are these activities undertaken?

"5. What actions are taken by women in the case of wrongful dismissal? Are they protected by the trade unions?

"6. What complaint and enforcement procedures have been instituted by the State in order to combat discrimination? Can women have recourse to courts or other institutions if they are discriminated against?

"7. Piecework, which is generally done at home, and flexible working hours are sought by women. What prompts women to choose this kind of work? And in what numbers?

"8. In order to guarantee women employment, the public authorities endeavour to give them proper vocational training before and during their employment, so that they may be more competitive in the labour market. During employment, what incentives are offered by the Government to encourage heads of businesses and factories to enrol more women in training courses? Compared with men, what percentage of women benefits from such incentives?

"9. Article 11 of the regulations on security of employment states that services employing a large number of women should gradually establish an infirmary, a room for rest, a room for nursing infants, a crèche and even a kindergarten. This is a step forward, but how is it perceived by the employers? How many are required to implement this reform? Will it not discourage the employment of adequate numbers of women in the enterprises?

"10. For how long is unemployment assistance provided to workers who have been dismissed by bankrupt enterprises? What provision is made for health care, social security and pension for unemployed people?

"11. Are women participating in the preparation of the new labour code?

"12. Do any measures exist to deal with sexual harassment?

"Article 12

"The integration of family planning services into basic maternal and child health services will mean that the problem can be tackled as a whole. The receipt of material and technical assistance from UNFPA has enabled China to identify the risks of reducing the mortality and morbidity rates for infants and mothers and to introduce in China the production of more effective modern contraceptives which meet more reliable control and quality standards. It has also enabled Chinese

researchers to carry out studies to diminish the adverse effects of certain products on women's health.

"1. The Tianjun Listang pharmaceuticals factory manufactures approximately 3.5 million Norplant subdermal contraceptive implants. It has been shown in some studies that this product endangers the health of women. Are there studies to monitor the effect of this drug on women's health?

"2. What is the status of the UNFPA-assisted project that advocates the information, education and communication (IEC) method? Who is responsible for implementing the programme? Women's organizations? Family planning services? Public health services?

"3. Participation of men. We know that in a number of developing countries the decision to use any particular contraceptive method is taken by the man. He decides for the woman yet does not feel concerned.

"(a) Are there programmes for men?

"(b) What methods are you using to sensitize men to the usefulness of becoming more involved in family planning and using reliable methods such as vasectomy or condoms when the health of the wife does not permit her to use contraception? Article 2 of the Marriage Act makes no distinction, since it states that the spouses are obliged to practise family planning.

"4. The population policy of China will cause considerable changes in Chinese society:

"(a) Ageing of the population; 10 per cent of the population will be over 60 from now until the year 2000 (made up of 109 women/100 men); this will give rise to problems of subsidies and care. What roles are there for Chinese women?

"(b) Will the policy of the single child, and the preference for boys, cause the number of women to diminish gradually and therefore create an imbalance?

"5. What programmes are there to encourage preventative measures to be taken in regard to AIDS?

"Article 13

"Which welfare organizations are concerned with the aged, the solitary and the handicapped?

"Article 14

"1. Does the contractual management system enable rural women to embark on activities other than agriculture to develop the communal economy?

"2. What products are produced for export by Chinese women and how are they advised in this work?

"3. Why does the level of pension of retired women in rural areas vary according to the level of development of the region in which they live?

"4. In practice, do women have equal access to land use? What are the requirements?

"5. Commendable efforts are being made to provide potable water, together with sanitation and electricity, to all the inhabitants of rural areas. Yet some areas are still without these basic necessities, and the women suffer more than anyone else because of this situation. What percentage of the population still lacks these necessities? Are additional resources being allocated to improve the situation?

"Article 15

"1. How have the laws been promoting the family and women? Could examples of the interpretation of these laws be given?

"2. Do women judges contribute to a favourable interpretation of legislative texts?

"Article 16

"The divorce rate has gone up, and 80 per cent of the applications for divorce are submitted by women on the legal ground of lack of affection. The report attributes this situation to the social progress that followed the opening up of China's economy.

"What measures are there to ensure that men and women are aware of their joint responsibility vis-à-vis the family and society and of the danger incurred by children owing to the very high divorce rate and what provisions are there for counselling and conciliation?"

Replies of the representative of China

3. The representative of China stated that since the report before the Committee had been submitted by his Government in 1989, covering developments from 1983 to 1989, and since further changes had occurred since then, he would like, first, to introduce supplementary information. He stated that the eighth five-year plan for national economy and social development had started in 1991. The overall situation in China had created favourable conditions for the smooth implementation of the Convention and he pointed to the following

new laws and regulations: the law on the protection of the rights and interests of women had been drafted and it would be before the fifth plenary of the Seventh National People's Congress later in 1992 for approval. A regulation by the Ministry of Labour and Personnel on the postponement of the retirement age of senior women experts enabled them to retire at the age of 60. Firm measures were being taken against various criminal acts infringing upon rights and interests of women. The Government had also formulated a decision on the strict prohibition against prostitution and whoring and a decision on the severe punishment of criminals who abduct and traffic in or kidnap women or children, both having legal effect. Articles on the protection of women were contained in two new laws that had taken effect in May 1991 and January 1992 respectively, namely the law for the protection of disabled persons and the law for the protection of the underaged.

4. The stipulations covered women's rights of participation in politics, in employment, education, marriage and the family, and of the person, thus making the protection of the rights and interests of women more systematic and comprehensive. The actions of the central Government had received positive support at the local level, and some 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions had formulated local regulations. The Chinese Government had also launched new activities for legal education.

5. Concerning women's participation in politics, vigorous efforts undertaken by the Government together with ACWF had proved to be very effective. In elections of deputies to the people's congresses at county and township levels in 1990, the average percentage of elected women had reached 21 per cent, with a peak of 25 per cent.

6. With regard to women in rural areas, the representative pointed out that 80 per cent of Chinese women lived in rural areas and women accounted for 50 per cent of the total rural labour force. A campaign, with the participation of some 10 ministries and other bodies, had been launched in 1989 for rural women to "learn to read and write, learn techniques and skills, emulate in achievements and emulate in contributions" to help women improve their qualifications and skills to fight poverty. Activities included: emulation drives of various professional skills, to teach women one or two professional skills and to eradicate illiteracy. Some 120 million women had participated, and the overwhelming majority had mastered one or two practical skills; 2.8 million women had overcome illiteracy; and 240,000 rural women had become agricultural technicians through educational courses.

7. In connection with the WHO campaign "health for all by the year 2000", China had put women's health care into the plan for primary health care with an emphasis on the countryside. One of the targets was to reduce the mortality rate of pregnant women and post partem mothers by 50 per cent. The network of maternal and child health (MCH) would be strengthened, and health care for rural women would be improved. Special attention would be paid to the training of country medical workers in basic preventive skills.

8. The representative then replied to the questions prepared by the pre-session working group.

9. He informed the Committee that China's GNP in 1990 amounted to 1,768.61 billion yuan renminbi. The national financial revenue was Y 331.26 billion. Social development and human resources expenditures were as follows: Y 22.18 billion on agriculture production assistance; Y 61.73 billion on education, culture, science and public health; and Y 5.5 billion on pensions and social relief. In a general question asked by the Committee on article 2 he said that China was engaged in its second five-year programme to disseminate legal knowledge and legal education. The focus was on 10 laws, including the Constitution, the marriage law, criminal law and civil law. Some 300 million women had participated in relevant activities in the first five-year period.

10. He stated also that the Act concerning public enterprises referred to workers, meaning both men and women, and that the potential of young workers should be given full play. Examples provided on the local laws of Beijing, Tianjin and others illustrated equality in, inter alia, promotion and remuneration. Also, an Act of Liaoning Province stated that women and men workers enjoyed the same rights to the allocation of houses, thus changing the past practice whereby only men were entitled to houses. Women, including widows, enjoyed rights in terms of economic independence, and violators would be punished in accordance with the law. The Working Group on Women and Children was mostly composed of women from judicial circles, and those in charge of women's and children's work.

11. On article 5, the representative stated that in recent years, China had witnessed an increase in the use of women's images in advertising. A recent seminar had focused on the role of the mass media in enhancing a positive and new image of women who enjoyed self-respect, self-confidence, self-independence and self-improvement.

12. On violence against women (articles 2, 5, 11, 12 and 16), the representative stated that it had not been a serious social problem in China. Respect for women's dignity was stressed by the Government. Forms of violence were: rape, beating and maltreatment of wives by their husbands, forced prostitution, kidnapping and abduction of women. Criminal and other relevant laws dealt with the matter. Rape was punished by imprisonment or death, depending on circumstances, maltreatment either by imprisonment or public surveillance and abduction by imprisonment, confiscation of property or death, depending on the severity.

13. On article 6, it was stated that Chinese law explicitly prohibited prostitution and forms of punishment include detention, warning, making confession in writing, education through physical labour or fines. If misdeeds were crimes, criminal law applied. The punishments for those who lured women into prostitution or profited from operating brothels were prison terms, detention for labour or surveillance. Pimps might be sentenced to 10 years or life imprisonment. Prostitutes and their customers might be rounded up to be provided with legal and moral education. They might be required to engage in productive labour. Treatment for venereal disease was compulsory. Steps taken to eradicate prostitution included economic development, ideological education and strengthening of legislation and law enforcement.

14. On article 7, the representative provided information on the percentage of women in governing bodies: 634 deputies (21.3 per cent) in the National People's Congress; 16 members (11.6 per cent) in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; 2 vice-chairpersons (10 per cent) in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; 10 members (6 per cent) and 12 alternate members (11 per cent) in the Central Committee of CPC; and 1 woman member (0.5 per cent) in the Advisory Commission of the CPC Central Committee. Efforts to increase women's participation included training and education for women to enhance their capabilities, and of the society at large to eradicate traditional thinking and behaviour. One of the main tasks of ACWF was to promote the participation of women at all levels and in all spheres of public life. There were currently three women ministers in China (7.3 per cent of the total) and 11 vice-ministers. The representative stated that the percentage is still far from satisfying. The Chinese Supreme Court had one woman vice-president. In recent years ACWF had been recommending women for high-level posts. He explained that ACWF was a membership organization composed not of individual members but of organizations. All adult women were potential associates of the Federation. Membership could be obtained through the filing of an application and by accepting the Federation's constitution.

15. On article 8: China currently had 1,314 women diplomats, or 26.9 per cent.

16. On article 10, the representative first clarified some numbers. China currently had a total of 180 million illiterate persons, of whom 70 per cent were women. In 1989, attendance by females in primary, secondary and tertiary schools was 46, 41.4 and 33.7 per cent of the respective total numbers; 97 per cent of school-age children attended school and the attendance rate for girls was 95 per cent. Measures to eradicate illiteracy included: long-term anti-illiteracy campaigns, increased funding and the creation of better conditions for schooling girls. The same recruitment standards for universities applied to males and females. Physical education was compulsory in China. Textbooks had always been based on principles of sexual equality and women's positive images.

17. On article 11, the representative stated that the principle of equal pay for equal work was applied in China. He said that the increase of the percentage of the female employment did not mean that women had taken the jobs of men. Women's federations assisted self-employed female workers mainly through legal advice. Some rural households owned by women in traditional farming were specialized in the breeding of animals, poultry and fish, processing, handicrafts, trading and services. Trade unions and the labour department could hear complaints concerning wrongful dismissal. Discrimination cases might be brought before the courts or to administrative departments. In China, all employed workers were requested to receive occupational training. Under a plan that ended in 1990, 37.4 per cent of the trainees were women. Various measures were in force to ensure basic living needs of staff of bankrupt enterprises, including unemployment subsidies of up to a total of 24 months, and retraining of workers. Women from trade unions

and women's organizations participated in the formulation of the new labour code. Sexual harassment was not a major problem in China, and judicial and administrative organs were called upon to solve cases on a case-by-case basis.

18. On article 12, the representative informed the Committee that the project referred to in the question had not been executed. Some implants had been bought for trial use and monitoring. China was developing its own similar product. Given the attention allocated by the Chinese Government to the health care of women and children, great progress had been made over the last four decades, and infant mortality rates had been greatly reduced. A public information and education campaign on population issues had been implemented since 1979 with UNFPA, the State Commission on Birth Control, the State Education Commission and the Ministry of Health. Birth control was the duty and obligation of both husband and wife. The elderly were revered in China. The Government had adopted various measures, including social insurance and welfare, free medicare and health care, for the elderly. There were elderly-oriented schools and recreational centres. The policy of encouraging couples to have only one child, in effect since 1979, had led to an increase in one-child families. In 1988, 52.22 per cent of families had one child, 32.41 per cent had two and 15.37 per cent had three or more (in 1970, the numbers were 22.73, 17.06 and 62.21 per cent respectively). The sexual ratio in 1988 was 106.8 males to 100 females (in 1970 the ratio was 105.5 to 100). The representative stated that that showed that the one-child family policy had not resulted in a sex imbalance of the population. Cases of AIDS had been detected in recent years in parts of China. Since 1985, over 600 patients had tested HIV positive. Although the infection rate was still low, China had adopted specific measures to prevent and control AIDS, including public education on the prevention of AIDS.

19. Coming to article 13, the representative said that the elderly, the widowed and the handicapped were the concern of the whole society. The civil affairs agencies, and those in charge of labour, education and health, as well as mass organizations such as the federations of the handicapped, women and youth offered a variety of assistance and services.

20. With regard to article 14, the representative stated that the reform of the economic system in China's rural areas had changed the pattern of production of primarily grain into a comprehensive development of agriculture, forestry, industry, trade, etc., thereby also creating favourable conditions for women to engage in a variety of new tasks. Women had become workers in local enterprises which had partially introduced the contract labour system, which closely linked the quality of work with remuneration, thereby also improving efficiency and providing incentives for workers. Rural women had made tremendous contributions to the revitalization of China's rural economy. Women's export products included foodstuffs, farm produce, fruits, garments, toys and electronic appliances, which were generally ordered and therefore had a solid market. Pensions for China's peasantry were not provided by the State. Whether there was a pension fund to provide pensions and other social benefits to its peasants, depended on the development level of the collective

economy in each place, and adequate collective savings of the rural collective. Rural collectives allocated land to peasants on the basis of the size of the family with no prejudice to their sex. Various ministries were involved in the effort to provide tap water. No numbers were currently available to the representative on the matter.

21. On article 15, the representative said that the Constitution stipulated that marriage and the family were protected by the State. The marriage law, containing freedom of marriage, monogamy and equality between men and women, had been promulgated twice. The law also enabled women's equal participation in social development. On the second question, he stated that it happened, but not necessarily.

22. Coming to article 16, the representative stated that family ties in China had always been stable. Although on the increase, the rate of divorce was a mere 5-7 per cent. The fact that women did initiate divorces was a demonstration of the breaking of the bondage of feudalistic ideas, he said. The focus, however, was on harmonious relationships, and efforts were made to assist couples in difficulties through advice and mediation. In handling divorces, the Government and society as a whole attached importance to the protection of the legitimate rights of women and children.

23. Members of the Committee thanked the representative for the detailed answers provided to the numerous questions. The Chinese Government and ACWF were congratulated for the effort and the progress achieved in implementing the Convention.

24. Additional clarification was sought on a number of points, including the following: on the political participation of women, it had been stated that training was used to enable more women to participate in the political process. The expert wondered whether that was not an old-fashioned, macho approach of the "undertraining" of women, since men did not have to go through such special standards. One expert also wondered why it was necessary to have new local rules protecting women who gave birth to girls. Concerning the efforts to combat illiteracy, one expert pointed to the existence of mobile schools in autonomous regions. She asked which language was being taught in Tibet. It was also asked if the measures described under article 12 had been freely accepted by the population, or if the Government had taken stronger measures. On the subject of social security, it was pointed out that the differences that exist between various regions' development levels were not in line with the aspired egalitarianism. One expert noted that things were moving very slowly and that political will alone was not enough to reach equality. The social infrastructure and the economic situation of the country should develop also, otherwise there was not the right framework for a solution to the equality issues. It was also noted that it was apparent that the stereotyped social patterns still prevailed in China and clarification was sought on the issue of equal pay for work of equal value. Another expert asked whether the representative agreed that women's tertiary education was essential for the larger participation of women. It was asked whether women's participation was a priority of the movement for democracy. Referring to the

representative's statement on the issue of sexual harassment that "this is not a problem" in China, an expert asked if that statement had less to do with the absence of harassment and more with the lack of adequate structures to point it out. One expert also asked to what extent the Government was satisfied with the changes in women's lives, and what approach was used to assess the status of women. Another question was related to ACWF funding.

25. In further discussion, some experts asked whether it was possible that the third periodic report could be broken down by regions to give a better picture and to make it easier for members to understand the issues involved due to the vastness of the country. It was also asked whether women were prominent in the dissident movement, whether gender was an issue and whether women were still detained or restricted in their freedom to travel. Concerning the low numbers of women in high political bodies (the Council), one expert pointed to structural problems rather than to the lack of education of women, and she asked whether the Government had set quotas for women.

26. In response to a number of follow-up and additional questions, the representative of China said that in accordance with the saying that women held up half the sky, women played very important roles in family and society. Due to cultural constraints, the current situation was not fully satisfactory, and tremendous efforts on a long-term basis were still required to eradicate the remnants of inequality. To that end, the Government had embarked on clear-cut policies and directions. He reiterated that the one-child family policy had been quite successful, and it was in line with the common interest of the population. Implementation was more successful in urban areas and among the better educated groups of the society. There were distinctions in the enforcement of the policy, in particular with regard to minorities and areas with lower population density. Regulations stipulating the protection of women with girls existed, but only in some areas where feudal influences, i.e., the preference for boys, still persisted. He stated that the Government had mainly carried out education and training for prostitutes. Concerning the use of language in Tibet, he stated that as stipulated by the Government of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the people of the region had the freedom to develop and use their own language. A 1978 regulation adopted by TNC stipulated the equal importance of both languages, with Tibetan being the principal one. Tibetan was the main language being taught in schools and universities in the region.

27. The representative went on to elaborate that objective reality had forced both spouses to participate in household chores, but that one could still see the traditional division of labour in rural areas, although the situation was changing. On the issue of whether equal pay for work of equal value should be applied, he replied in the affirmative equal work. He further said that the Chinese Government respected dissidents in having different political and religious opinions. It did not discriminate against such persons. He pointed to the example of a woman journalist who had written many articles critical of the Chinese Government in the People's Daily, and who had recently been granted the opportunity to go to the United States of America to study. Concerning the so-called model daughter-in-law award, he said that his

Government promoted good family relations for social progress. The emphasis was on respect for the old, love the young and respect among the spouses and on equality. He agreed with the importance of international cultural exchanges among women, and education for girls. ACWF received its funding mainly from the Government and partly through donations.

28. He also stated that his Government would carefully study the point raised by some members, namely to have the third periodic report provide information broken down by region. As the experts had stated, China was a very big country, and it would be interesting and useful for the experts to receive information by region. It had been indicated by experts that that might also be of assistance to the Government in assessing the situation and in obtaining a more detailed picture of the situation of women in China.

29. In her concluding remarks on behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson thanked the representative and his delegation for their presence and the answers to the many questions, which proved the importance the Government of China placed on women's issues, and showed that they heeded the Convention and the Committee. She also expressed her appreciation for the fact that China had not entered any reservations to the Convention, except on article 29, which, however, did not deal with discrimination. China was a large country, she went on, and the responsibility was huge to face up to issues such as traditions.

30. She pointed to two new positive steps taken by the Government, namely the adoption of new laws for women, and structural adjustment in the economy, which led to an increased GNP. A percentage of that increase would go towards programmes that were social or economic in nature, and women would benefit from it. Since structural adjustment programmes often caused women to become victims, owing to the removal of social programmes from the budget, she expressed her hope that the next report would provide the Committee with an evaluation and assessment of those programmes, which could become an example to be followed by others. She stated that illiteracy was still a problem, with 70 per cent of the 180 million illiterates being women. Extensive treatment was required, she continued, since illiteracy was a huge problem in the advancement of women. She found the 26 per cent women in the diplomatic corps to be a sizeable number, but eight women ambassadors was perhaps not such a large number, and she hoped that that would increase. Concerning population matters, and the question whether by tradition preference was given to men, she said that the numbers provided by the representative had removed fears on the male:female ratios. She hoped that the Government would continue to pay attention to the balance between males and females.

31. Concerning the next report, she expressed her hope that the Committee would receive more details on the percentages of women, and on procedures to overcome old habits. She pointed to the linkage between the political history of a country and its socio-economic situation, which in China found its expression between the feudal system and the fact that men were considered to be superior. If the next report could stress those points, it would help the Government to overcome those problems.